

A Safe Route to Healthy Food

"The community action aroused immediate attention from the Council member's office and elevated the issue to high priority status in just one month."

James Harris, Southwest Neighborhood Council

PROBLEM

In the Westmont neighborhood of Los Angeles, there is an unsafe street crossing to Jesse Owens Park—the location of a Healthy Parks Healthy People program. The park offers many free services—computer classes, after school tutoring, aerobics, tennis clinics, swimming lessons, fitness fairs, and has a full-service kitchen facility.

SOLUTION

Establish a pedestrian crosswalk at Century Boulevard and St. Andrews Place.

PARTNERS

- Westmont Residents
- Southwest Neighborhood Council
- Los Angeles City Council Member
- Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- African American 5 a Day Campaign

STEPS TOWARD CHANGE

Residents came together at meetings of the Southwest Neighborhood Council and talked about the dangerous road crossing. They expressed a strong willingness to participate in the Healthy Parks Healthy People program if only a crosswalk was installed to create safe passage to the park. As a result of the community discussion, the Southwest Neighborhood Council reached out to community leaders including a minister, health officer for Service Planning Area 6, the Los Angeles mayor, a Los Angeles County Board Supervisor, and a council member.

As a catalyst for change, 200 neighborhood residents delivered pledge cards to the council member expressing their commitment to participate in the nutrition education and physical activity programs at Jesse Owens Park if safe passage to the park was provided. A forum was held to discuss community concerns and the issue is now at the forefront of the city council's agenda.

Residents hope that a pedestrian crosswalk will be installed, making it safe for them to walk to the park. If installed, this action could spur stronger community participation in programs that will increase healthy eating and physical activity among local residents.



For more information, visit www.ca5aday.com or contact Meka Webb, African American 5 a Day Campaign, at mwebb@ladhs.org.

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